REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is requested in view of the following remarks.

Claims 1-6, 9, and 10 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by Shimakawa. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

In the invention of claim 1, each battery module comprises a plurality of cells. The plurality of cells is housed in a single container. A single safety valve operates in accordance with the internal pressure of the container.

Page 3 of the Office Action, second paragraph, states that Shimakawa teaches multiple single containers, wherein each container has a single safety valve and a plurality of cells. The Examiner also states on page 4 of the Office Action, in the last sentence of the first paragraph, that the reference is anticipatory as long as it teaches at least one container with a single safety valve and a plurality of cells.

The Applicants respectfully disagree with the rejection's characterization of the Shimakawa disclosure. Even if Shimakawa is viewed to include multiple single containers, each with a single safety valve, Shimakawa still fails to disclose that each container includes a plurality of cells. Each container of Shimakawa houses only one cell, not a plurality of cells. Thus, even if the battery module of Shimakawa includes a plurality of containers and a plurality of safety valves corresponding to the number of containers, the containers lack "the plurality of cells" limitation that is recited in claim 1. Therefore, independent claim 1 is not anticipated by Shimakawa.

In Shimakawa, since the battery module includes a plurality of safety valves, one corresponding to each cell, the amount of electrolyte released from the cells through the safety valves may be relatively increased. In the configuration of claim 1, however, since the battery module includes only one safety valve corresponding to all the cells in one container, the amount of electrolyte released from the cells through the single safety valve is reduced, thereby

permitting the cells to retain sufficient electrolyte to maintain the desired battery characteristics. Shimakawa in no way suggests that such advantages could be achieved.

In view of the above, favorable reconsideration in the form of a Notice of Allowance is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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